

How to start the conversation of getting help at home



There has never been an easier way of saying ‘you need help’ particularly when roles are reversed and the topic is aged care. Such a conversation initiates mixed emotional reactions with the aged loved one or parent fearing the loss of independence while the carer or family member feeling guilty for not being able to give enough and offer full-time support.

As nature has it, we are all bound to age. What we never see is the creeping vulnerability that tags along. With the dwindling state of health and mind, a senior’s independence is usually put through its paces. Even though this might be the new reality, there is light at the end of the tunnel under the aegis of home care services which can maintain your loved one’s independence at their own home.

As an adult child, taking the role as the sole care-giver to your elderly parent can be overwhelming, even when you put your best foot forward. And even though you or your parent might not like it, let alone have any clue of how to prepare for it, looking for outside help, especially from a home care professional, will make life easier and safe for everyone.

To arrange for this conversation, it’s important to be as sensitive yet educative and slowly let your elderly love one acknowledge reasons why they need help, who home care professionals are, what they do and what they don’t (particularly when they feel their independence is at threat).

However, starting this conversation is one thing, and doing it right is something else entirely. Let’s check some of these dos and no-nos for starting the much needed conversation about getting help at home.

The sooner, the better

This can’t be stressed enough. Preparation always averts options forced because of circumstances. Caring for seniors starts when they are in good shape and health. Therefore, as early as possible, start the conversation about the option of home care

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and learn about their future plans, goals and preferences particularly when a problem crops up.

You will however need to do your homework and learn how to break the ice without sounding forceful.

Identify signs that warrants the need for help

One step is having a keen eye for detail for noticing anything amiss. It's upon family members or friends to spot signs that screams help since they know more about their loved one than most. Such signs can be indicated by:

- ▶ Less showers
- ▶ Wearing wrinkled or unwashed clothes
- ▶ Unkempt yard
- ▶ Untidy house
- ▶ Empty fridge
- ▶ Hearing problems
- ▶ Poor balance
- ▶ Reduced mobility
- ▶ Lack of coordination
- ▶ Missed medication doses

Even though some of these signs are unnoticeable to outsiders, they should be noteworthy cautionary signs to you that prompts early interventions.

Be as sensitive as possible

This conversation calls for sensitivity and patients from start to finish. When things get a bit upsetting or when the elderly becomes restless or uncomfortable, it is okay to pause this conversation for another time or day. After all, they are adults too and they deserve some respect and compassion when addressing issues that affects them.

Don't rush

As much as this conversation should be struck while the iron's hot, it's vital not to just rush through it. Besides, you can't wrap everything in one conversation and having that in mind, plan and prepare to engage in series of discussions.

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Keep it simple

During this honest dialogue, listen more and talk less. Get to understand your loved ones' concerns or wishes and avoid jamming them with excess information with research and statistics –this will overwhelm them.

Learn facts to discuss

Environment has a hand on physical safety, mental health and longevity of a senior. Learning about safe environments and ideas for keeping your loved one safe will put you in a better position when discussing and deciding home care options for them.

Talking with a service provider

As the old adage goes, 'a problem shared is a problem halved.' Involving home care providers will give them more confidence in getting help as they will be able to ask them questions and get answers instantly. They will get insights as to how to live their own lives at their own homes even with some foreign help offered.